Gamester

Moore's

GAMESTER,

A TRAGEDY;

REVISED BY

J. P. KEMBLE;

AND NOW FIRST PUBLISHED AS IT IS PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL.

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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

		Drury-Lane.	*Covent-Garden.*
Beverley,	—	Mr. Rae.	Mr. Young.
Lewson,	—	Mr. Elrington.	Mr. Abbott.
Stukely,	—	Mr. Raymond.	Mr. Terry.
Jarvis,	—	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Murray.
Bates,	—	Mr. R. Phillips.	Mr. Creswell.
Dawson,	—	Mr. I. Wallack.	Mr. Claremont.
Waiter,	—	Mr. Maddocks.	Mr. Menage.
Mrs. Beverley,	—	Mrs. Bartley.	Miss O'Neill.
Charlotte,	—	Miss Boyce.	Miss Foote.
Lucy,	—	Miss Tidswell.	Mrs. Coates.

THE

GAMESTER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Beverley's Lodgings.

Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE *discovered, seated.*

Mrs. Bev. BE comforted, my dear; all may be well yet.—And now, methinks, the lodgings begin to look with another face. O sister, sister! if these were all my hardships; if all I had to complain of were no more than quitting my house, servants, equipage and show, your pity would be weakness.

Char. Is poverty nothing then?

Mrs. Bev. Nothing in the world, if it affected only me. While we had a fortune, I was the happiest of the rich: and now 't is gone, give me but a bare subsistence, and my husband's smiles, and I 'll be the happiest of the poor. To me now, these lodgings want nothing but their master. Why do you look at me?

Char. That I may hate my brother.

Mrs. Bev. Don't talk so, Charlotte.

Char. Has he not undone you?——O! this pernicious vice of gaming! But methinks his usual hours of four or five in the morning might have contented him; 't was misery enough to wake for him till then:

Need he have staid out all night? I shall learn to detest him!

Mrs. Bev. Not for the first fault. He never slept from me before.

Char. Slept from you! No, no, his nights have nothing to do with sleep. How has this one vice driven him from every virtue! Nay, from his affections too!—The time was, sister—

Mrs. Bev. And is. [*Rises*] I have no fear of his affections. 'Would I knew that he were safe!

Char. From ruin and his companions—But that 's impossible. His poor little boy too! What must become of him?

Mrs. Bev. Why, want shall teach him industry. From his father's mistakes he shall learn prudence, and from his mother's resignation, patience. Poverty has no such terrors in it as you imagine. There 's no condition of life, sickness and pain excepted, where happiness is excluded. The husbandman, who rises early to his labour, enjoys more welcome rest at night for 't. His bread is sweeter to him; his home happier; his family dearer; his enjoyments surer. The sun that rouses him in the morning, sets in the evening to release him. All situations have their comforts, if sweet contentment dwell in the heart. But my poor Beverley has none. The thought of having ruin'd those he loves, is misery for ever to him. 'Would I could ease his mind of that!

Char. If he alone were ruin'd, 't were just he should be punish'd. He is my brother, 't is true; but, when I think of what he has done, of the fortune you brought him, of his own large estate too, squander'd away upon this vilest of passions, and among the vilest of wretches,—O! I have no patience. My own little fortune is untouch'd, he says. 'Would I were sure on 't.

Mrs. Bev. And so you may—'t would be a sin to doubt it.

Char. I will be sure on 't—'t was madness in me to give it to his management. But I 'll demand it from him this morning. I have a melancholy occasion for 't.

Mrs. Bev. What occasion?

Char. To support a sister.

Mrs. Bev. No; I have no need on 't. Take it, and reward a lover with it. The generous Lewson deserves much more. Why won't you make him happy?

Char. Because my sister 's miserable.

Mrs. Bev. You must not think so. I have my jewels left yet. I 'll sell 'em to supply our wants; and when all 's gone, these hands shall toil for our support. The poor should be industrious.—Why those tears, Charlotte?

Char. They flow in pity for you.

Mrs. Bev. All may be well yet. When he has nothing to lose, I shall fetter him in these arms again; and then, what is it to be poor?

Char. Cure him but of this destructive passion, and my uncle's death may retrieve all yet.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, Charlotte, could we cure him. But the disease of play admits no cure but poverty; and the loss of another fortune would but increase his shame and his affliction. Will Mr. Lewson call this morning?

Char. He said so last night. He gave me hints, too, that he had suspicions of our friend Stukely.

Mrs. Bev. Not of treachery to my husband? That he loves play, I know; but surely he 's honest.

Char. He labours to be thought so; therefore I doubt him. Honesty needs no pains to set itself off.

Enter LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. What now, Lucy?

Lucy. Your old steward, madam. I had not the heart to deny him admittance, the good old man begg'd so hard for 't.

Enter JARVIS.—*Exit* LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. Is this well, Jarvis? I desir'd you to avoid me.

Jar. Did you, madam? I am an old man, and had forgot. Perhaps, too, you forbad my tears; but I am old, madam, and age will be forgetful.

Mrs. Bev. The faithful creature!

Char. Not to have seen him, had been cruelty.

Jar. I have forgot these apartments too. I remember none such in my young master's house; and yet I have liv'd in 't these five and twenty years. His good father would not have dismiss'd me.

Mrs. Bev. He had no reason, Jarvis.

Jar. I was faithful to him while he liv'd, and when he dy'd, he bequeath'd me to his son. I have been faithful to him too.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, I know it, Jarvis.

Jar. I am an old man, madam, and have not a long time to live. I ask'd but to have dy'd with him, and he dismiss'd me.

Mrs. Bev. 'Pr'ythee no more of this! 'T was his poverty that dismiss'd you.

Jar. Is he indeed so poor, then?—O, he was the joy of my old heart!——But must his creditors have all?—And have they sold his house too? His father built it when he was but a prating boy. The times that I have carry'd him in these arms! And, Jarvis, says he, when a beggar has ask'd charity of me, why should people be poor? You shan't be poor, Jarvis; if I was a king, no-body should be poor: Yet, he is poor. And then he was so brave!—O, he was a brave little boy! and yet so merciful, he'd not have kill'd the gnat that stung him.

Mrs. Bev. Speak to him, Charlotte; for I cannot.

Jar. I have a little money, madam: it might have

been more, but I have lov'd the poor. All that I have is yours.

Mrs. Bev. No, Jarvis; we have enough yet; I thank you, though, and will deserve your goodness.

Jar. But shall I see my master? And will he let me attend him in his distresses? I'll be no expense to him; and 't will kill me to be refus'd. Where is he, madam?

Mrs. Bev. Not at home, Jarvis. You shall see him another time.

Char. To-morrow, or the next day.—O, Jarvis! What a change is here!

Jar. A change indeed, madam! My old heart akes at it. And yet, methinks,——But here 's something coming.

Enter LUCY, *with* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr. Stukely, madam. [*Exit* LUCY.

Stu. Good morning to you, ladies. Mr. Jarvis, your servant. Where 's my friend, madam?

Mrs. Bev. I should have ask'd that question of you. Have you seen him to-day?

Stu. No, madam.

Char. Nor last night?

Stu. Last night! Did he not come home, then?

Mrs. Bev. No. Were you not together?

Stu. At the beginning of the evening; but not since. Where can he have staid?

Char. You call yourself his friend, sir; why do you encourage him in this madness of gaming?

Stu. You have ask'd me that question before, madam; and I told you, my concern was that I could not save him; Mr. Beverley is a man, madam; and, if the most friendly entreaties have no effect upon him, I have no other means. My purse has been his, even to the injury of my fortune. If that has been encouragement, I deserve censure; but I meant it, to retrieve him.

Mrs. Bev. I don't doubt it, sir; and I thank you. —But where did you leave him last night?

Stu. At Wilson's, madam, if I ought to tell; in company I did not like. Possibly, he may be there still. Mr. Jarvis knows the house, I believe.

Jar. Shall I go, madam?

Mrs. Bev. No; he may take it ill.

Char. He may go, as from himself.

Stu. And, if he pleases, madam, without naming me: I am faulty myself, and should conceal the errors of a friend: but I can refuse nothing here.

Jar. I would fain see him, methinks.

Mrs. Bev. Do so, then. But take care how you upbraid him. I have never upbraided him.

Jar. 'Would I cou'd bring him comfort!

[*Exit* JARVIS.

Stu. Don't be too much alarm'd, madam. All men have their errors, and their times of seeing 'em. Perhaps, my friend's time is not come yet. But he has an uncle; and old men don't live for ever. You should look forward, madam; we are taught how to value a second fortune by the loss of a first.

[*Knocking at the Door.*]

Mrs. Bev. Hark!—No—that knocking was too rude for Mr. Beverley. 'Pray heaven he be well!

Stu. Never doubt it, madam. You shall be well, too:—every thing shall be well. [*Knocking again.*]

Mrs. Bev. The knocking is a little loud, tho'.— Who waits there? Will none of you answer?—None of you, did I say?—Alas! what was I thinking of!— I had forgot myself.

Char. I 'll go, sister.—But don't be alarm'd so.

[*Exit* CHARLOTTE.

Stu. What extraordinary accident have you to fear, madam?

Mrs. Bev. I beg your pardon; but 't is ever thus with me in Mr. Beverley's absence. No one knocks at the door, but I fancy it is a messenger of ill news.

Stu. You are too fearful, madam; 't was but one night of absence; and, if ill thoughts intrude, as love is always doubtful, think of your worth and beauty, and drive 'em from your breast.

Mrs. Bev. What thoughts? I have no thoughts that wrong my husband.

Stu. Such thoughts indeed would wrong him. The world is full of slander; and every wretch that knows himself unjust, charges his neighbour with like passions; and by the general frailty, hides his own:—If you are wise, and would be happy, turn a deaf ear to such reports. 'T is ruin to believe 'em.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, worse than ruin. 'T would be, to sin against conviction. Why was it mention'd?

Stu. To guard you against rumour. The sport of half mankind is mischief; and for a single error, they make men devils. If their tales reach you, disbelieve 'em.

Mrs. Bev. What tales? By whom? Why told? I have heard nothing:—or if I had, with all his errors, my Beverley's firm faith admits no doubt—it is my safety, my seat of rest and joy, while the storm threatens round me. I'll not forsake it. [STUKELY *sighs, and looks down.*] Why turn you, sir, away? and why that sigh?

Stu. I was attentive, madam; and sighs will come, we know not why. Perhaps, I have been too busy: if it should seem so, impute my zeal to friendship, that meant to guard you against evil tongues. Your Beverley is wrong'd, slander'd most vilely:—my life upon his truth.

Mrs. Bev. And mine too. Who is 't that doubts it? But no matter:—I am prepar'd, sir.—Yet, why this caution?—You are my husband's friend; I think you mine too; the common friend of both:—[*Pauses*] I had been unconcern'd else.

Stu. For heaven's sake, madam, be so still! I meant to guard you against suspicion, not to alarm it.

Mrs. Bev. Nor have you, sir. Who told you of suspicion? I have a heart it cannot reach.

Stu. Then I am happy:—I would say more; but am prevented.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Char. What a heart has that Jarvis!—A creditor, sister. But the good old man has taken him away.—Don't distress his wife! Don't distress his sister! I could hear him say. 'Tis cruel, to distress the afflicted:—And, when he saw me at the door, he begg'd pardon that his friend had knock'd so loud.

Stu. I wish I had known of this. Was it a large demand, madam?

Char. I heard not that; but visits such as these, we must expect often.—Why so distress'd, sister? This is no new affliction.

Mrs. Bev. No Charlotte; but I am faint with watching—quite sunk and spiritless—Will you excuse me, sir? I'll to my chamber, and try to rest a little.

Stu. Good thoughts go with you, madam!—

[*Exit Mrs.* BEVERLEY.

[*Aside*] My bait is taken then.—Poor Mrs. Beverley! how my heart grieves to see her thus!

Char. Cure her, and be a friend then.

Stu. How cure her, madam?

Char. Reclaim my brother.

Stu. Ay; give him a new creation; or breathe another soul into him. I'll think on't, madam. Advice, I see, is thankless.

Char. Useless, I am sure, it is; if, thro' mistaken friendship, or other motives, you feed his passion with your purse, and soothe it by example. Physicians, to cure fevers, keep from the patient's thirsty lip the cup that wou'd enflame him: you give it to his hands.—[*A knocking.*] Hark, sir!—These are my brother's desperate symptoms.——Another creditor!

Stu. [*Aside*]—One not so easily got rid of: 't is Williams.——What, Lewson!

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. Madam, your servant.—Yours, sir.—I was enquiring for you at your lodgings.

Stu. This morning? You had business then?

Lew. You 'll call it by another name, perhaps. Where 's Mr. Beverley, madam?

Char. We have sent to enquire for him.

Lew. Is he abroad then? He did not use to go out so early.

Char. No; nor to stay out so late.

Lew. Is that the case? I am sorry for it. But Mr. Stukely, perhaps, may direct you to him.

Stu. I have already, sir.—But, what was your business with me?

Lew. To congratulate you upon your late successes at play. Poor Beverley! but you are his friend; and there 's a comfort in having successful friends.

Stu. And what am I to understand by this?

Lew. That Beverley 's a poor man, with a rich friend:—that 's all.

Stu. Your words would mean something, I suppose. Another time, sir, I shall desire an explanation.

Lew. And why not now? I am no dealer in long sentences. A minute or two will do for me.

Stu. But not for me, sir. I am slow of apprehension, and must have time and privacy. A lady's presence engages my attention.—Another morning, I may be found at home.

Lew. Another morning then, I 'll wait upon you.

Stu. I shall expect you, sir.—Madam, your servant.

[*Exit* STUKELY.

Char. What mean you by this?

Lew. To hint to him that I know him.

Char. How know him? Mere doubt and supposition!

Lew. I shall have proof soon.

Char. And what then? Would you risk your life to be his punisher?

Lew. My life, madam? Don't be afraid: and yet, I am happy in your concern for me. But let it content you, that I know this Stukely:—'t would be as easy to make him honest as brave.

Char. And what do you intend to do?

Lew. Nothing, 'till I have proof. Yet my suspicions are well grounded.—But, methinks, madam, I am acting here without authority. Could I have leave to call Mr. Beverley brother, his concerns would be my own. Why will you make my services appear officious?

Char. You know my reasons, and should not press me. But I am cold, you say; and cold I will be, while a poor sister's destitute.—My heart bleeds for her; and, 'till I see her sorrows moderated, love has no joys for me.

Lew. Where is she?

Char. Gone to her chamber:—her spirits fail'd her.

Lew. I hear her coming:—let what has pass'd with Stukely be a secret:—she has already too much to trouble her.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY.

Mrs. Bev. Good morning, sir. I heard your voice; and, as I thought, enquiring for me.—Where's Mr. Stukely, Charlotte?

Char. This moment gone.—You have been in tears, sister; but here's a friend shall comfort you.

Lew. Or, if I add to your distresses, I beg your pardon, madam. The sale of your house and furniture was finish'd yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, sir. I know too, your generous reason for putting me in mind of it. But you have oblig'd me too much already.

Lew. There are trifles, madam, which I know you

have set a value on; those I have purchas'd, and will deliver. I have a friend too that esteems you:—He has bought largely; and will call nothing his, till he has seen you. If a visit to him would not be painful, he has begg'd, it may be this morning.

Mrs. Bev. Not painful in the least. My pain is from the kindness of my friends. Why am I to be oblig'd beyond the power of return?

Lew. You shall repay us at your own time. I have a coach waiting at the door:—Shall we have your company, madam?

Char. No. My brother may return soon; I 'll stay and receive him.

Mrs. Bev. He may want a comforter, perhaps. But don't upbraid him, Charlotte. We shan't be absent long.——Come, sir,—since I must be so oblig'd.

Lew. 'T is I that am oblig'd. An hour or less will be sufficient for us.—We shall find you at home, madam?

Char. Certainly.

[*Exeunt* LEWSON, *Mrs.* BEVERLEY,—*and* CHARLOTTE.

SCENE II.

Stukely's Lodgings.

Enter STUKELY.

Stu. That Lewson suspects me, 'tis too plain. Yet, why shou'd he suspect me?—I appear the friend of Beverley, as much as he.—But I am rich, it seems:—and so I am:—thanks to another's folly and my own wisdom!—To what use is wisdom, but to take advantage of the weak? This Beverley's my fool; I cheat him, and he calls me friend.—But more business must be done yet. His wife's jewels are unsold; so is the reversion of his uncle's estate. I must have

these too:—And then, there's a treasure above all:—I love his wife.—Before she knew this Beverley, I lov'd her; but, like a cringing fool, bow'd at a distance, while he stept in and won her.—Never, never will I forgive him for't. I must have vengeance.—Those hints this morning were well thrown in:—Already they have fasten'd on her. If jealousy should weaken her affections, want may corrupt her virtue.—My heart rejoices in the hope.—These jewels may do much. He shall demand 'em of her; which, when mine, shall be converted to special purposes.—What now, Bates?

Enter BATES.

Bates. Is it a wonder then, to see me? The forces are all in readiness, and only wait for orders. Where's Beverley?

Stu. At last night's rendezvous, waiting for me. Is Dawson with you?

Bates. Dress'd like a nobleman; with money in his pocket, and a set of dice that shall deceive the devil.

Stu. That fellow has a head to undo a nation: but, for the rest, they are such low-manner'd, ill-looking dogs, I wonder Beverley has not suspected 'em.

Bates. No matter for manners and looks: do you supply 'em with money, and they are gentlemen by profession.—The passion of gaming casts such a mist before the eyes, that the nobleman shall be surrounded with sharpers, and imagine himself in the best company.

Stu. There's that Williams too: it was he, I suppose, that call'd at Beverley's with the note this morning. What directions did you give him?

Bates. To knock loud, and be clamorous. Did not you see him?

Stu. No: the fool sneak'd off with Jarvis. Had

he appear'd within doors, as directed, I should have discharged the note myself. I waited near on purpose. I want the women to think well of me; for Lewson's grown suspicious:—He told me so himself.

Bates. What answer did you make him?

Stu. A short one;—that I wou'd see him soon, for further explanation.

Bates. We must take care of him. But what have we to do with Beverley? Dawson and the rest are wondering at you.

Stu. Why, let 'em wonder. I have designs above their narrow reach. They see me lend him money; and they stare at me: but they are fools.—I want him to believe me beggar'd by him.

Bates. And what then?

Stu. Ay, there 's the question: but no matter. At night you may know more. He waits for me at Wilson's. I told the women where to find him.

Bates. To what purpose?

Stu. To save suspicion. It look'd friendly; and they thank'd me. Old Jarvis was despatch'd to him.

Bates. And may intreat him home.

Stu. No; he expects money from me: but I'll have none. His wife's jewels must go.—Women are easy creatures, and refuse nothing where they love.—Follow to Wilson's; but be sure, he sees you not:—You are a man of character, you know; of prudence and discretion:—You will wait for me at Wilson's in an outer room; I shall presently have employment for you. Come, sir:

Let drudging fools by honesty grow great;
The shorter road to riches is deceit.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Gaming House, with a Table, Box, Dice, &c.

BEVERLEY *is discovered.*

Bev. WHY, what a world is this! The slave that digs for gold, receives his daily pittance, and sleeps contented; while those for whom he labours, convert their good to michief, making abundance the means of want. O shame! shame!—Had fortune given me but a little, that little had been still my own. What had I to do with play? I wanted nothing: my wishes and my means were equal: the poor follow'd me with blessings; love scatter'd roses on my pillow, and morning wak'd me to delight.——O, bitter thought! that leads to what I was, by what I am! I would forget both.——Who 's there?

Enter a Waiter.

Wait. A gentleman, sir, enquires for you.

Bev. He might have us'd less ceremony. Stukely, I suppose?

Wait. No, sir, a stranger.

Bev. Well, show him in.— [*Exit Waiter.*
A messenger from Stukely then, from him that has undone me!——Yet all in friendship; and now he lends me from his little, to bring back fortune to me.—

Enter JARVIS.

Jarvis!—Why this intrusion?——Your absence had been kinder.

Jar. I came in duty, sir:—if it be troublesome,——

Bev. It is:—I would be private,—hid even from myself.—Who sent you hither?

Jar. One that wou'd persuade you home again. My mistress is not well; her tears told me so.

Bev. Go with thy duty there, then.——But does she weep? I am to blame to let her weep. 'Pr'ythee, be gone: I have no business for thee.

Jar. Yes, sir; to lead you from this place. I am your servant still. Your prosperous fortune bless'd my old age. If that has left you, I must not leave you.

Bev. Not leave me? Recall past time then; or, through this sea of storms and darkness, show me a star to guide me.——But what can'st thou?

Jar. The little that I can, I will. You have been generous to me;—I wou'd not offend you, sir,—but——

Bev. No. Think'st thou, I'd ruin thee too? I have enough of shame already.——My wife! my wife!—Would'st thou believe it, Jarvis! I have not seen her all this long night:—I, who have lov'd her so, that every hour of absence seem'd as a gap in life. But other bonds have held me.—O! I have play'd the boy, dropping my counters in the stream, and reaching to redeem 'em, lost myself! Why wilt thou follow misery? or, if thou wilt, go to thy mistress: she has no guilt to sting her; and therefore may be comforted.

Jar. For pity's sake, sir!—I have no heart, to see this change.

Bev. Nor I, to bear it.—How speaks the world of me, Jarvis?

Jar. As of a good man, dead: of one, who walking in a dream, fell down a precipice. The world is sorry for you.

Bev. Ay, and pities me. Says it not so? But I was born to infamy.—I'll tell thee what it says: It calls me villain; a treacherous husband; a cruel father; a false brother; one lost to nature and her

charities; or, to say all in one short word, it calls me —gamester.—Go to thy mistress: I 'll see her presently.

Jar. And why not now? Rude people press upon her; loud, bawling creditors; wretches, who know no pity.—I met one at the door; he would have seen my mistress. I wanted means of present payment, so promis'd it to-morrow. But others may be pressing; and she has grief enough already. Your absence hangs too heavy on her.

Bev. Tell her I 'll come, then. I have a moment's business. But what hast thou to do with my distresses? Thy honesty has left thee poor; and age wants comfort. Keep what thou hast for cordials; lest between thee and the grave, misery steal in. I have a friend shall counsel me.—This is that friend.

Enter STUKELY.

Stu. How fares it, Beverley? Honest Mr. Jarvis, well met. I hop'd to find you here. That viper Williams! was it not he that troubled you this morning?

Jar. My mistress heard him then?—I am sorry that she heard him.

Bev. And Jarvis promis'd payment.

Stu. That must not be. Tell him, I 'll satisfy him.

Jar. Will you, sir? Heaven will reward you for't.

Bev. Generous Stukely! Friendship like yours might almost balance the wrongs of fortune.

Stu. You think too kindly of me.—Make haste to Williams; his clamours may be rude else.

Jar. And my master will go home again.—Alas! sir, we know of hearts there breaking for his absence.

[*Exit* JARVIS.

Bev. 'Would I were dead!

Stu. Ha! ha! ha!—'Pr'ythee, be a man, and leave dying to disease and old age. Fortune may be ours again; at least, we 'll try for 't.

Bev. No; it has fool'd us on too far.

Stu. Ay, ruin'd us; and therefore we 'll sit down contented. These are the despondings of men without money: but, let the shining ore chink in the pocket, and folly turns to wisdom. We are Fortune's children: true, she 's a fickle mother: but shall we droop, because she 's peevish?—No; she has smiles in store; and these her frowns are meant to brighten 'em.

Bev. Is this a time for levity? But you are single in the ruin, and therefore may talk lightly of it: with me, 't is complicated misery.

Stu. You censure me unjustly:—I but assum'd these spirits, to cheer my friend. Heaven knows, he wants a comforter!

Bev. What new misfortune?

Stu. I would have brought you money; but lenders want securities. What 's to be done? All that was mine is yours already.

Bev. And there 's the double weight that sinks me. I have undone my friend too; one, who to save a drowning wretch, reach'd out his hand, and perish'd with him.

Stu. Have better thoughts.

Bev. Whence are they to proceed?—I have nothing left.

Stu. Then we 're indeed undone. What, nothing? No moveables, nor useless trinkets? Bawbles lock'd up in caskets, to starve their owners?—I have ventur'd deeply for you.

Bev. Therefore this heart-ake; for I am lost beyond all hope.

Stu. No; means may be found to save us. Jarvis is rich. Who made him so? This is no time for ceremony.

Bev. And is it for dishonesty? The good old man! Shall I rob him too? My friend would grieve for 't. No; let the little that he has, buy food and cloathing for him.

Stu. Good morning, then.

Bev. So hasty!—Why then, good morning.

Stu. And, when we meet again, upbraid me: say, it was I that tempted you: tell Lewson so; and tell him, I have wrong'd you:—He has suspicions of me, and will thank you.

Bev. No; we have been companions in a rash voyage, and the same storm has wreck'd us both: mine shall be self-upbraidings.

Stu. And will they feed us? You deal unkindly by me. I have sold and borrow'd for you, while land or credit lasted; and now, when fortune should be try'd, and my heart whispers me succes, I am deserted, turn'd loose to beggary; while you have hoards.

Bev. What hoards? Name 'em, and take 'em.

Stu. Jewels.

Bev. And shall this thriftless hand seize them too? My poor, poor wife! must she lose all? I would not wound her so.

Stu. Nor I; but from necessity. One effort more, and fortune may grow kind. I have unusual hopes.

Bev. Think of some other means then.

Stu. I have; and you rejected 'em.

Bev. 'Pr'ythee, let me be a man.

Stu. Ay, and your friend a poor one. But I have done. And for these trinkets of a woman, why, let her keep 'em to deck out pride with, and show a laughing world that she has finery to starve in.

Bev. No; she shall yield up all: my friend demands it. But needs he have talk'd lightly of her? The jewels that she values are truth and innocence; those will adorn her ever:—for the rest, she wore 'em for a husband's pride, and to his wants will give 'em. You know her not.—Where shall we meet?

Stu. No matter. I have chang'd my mind. Leave me to a prison; 'tis the reward of friendship.

Bev. Perish mankind first!—Leave you to a prison? No; fallen as you see me, I 'm not that wretch: nor

would I change this heart, o'ercharg'd as 'tis with folly and misfortune, for one most prudent and most happy, if callous to a friend's distresses.

Stu. Your are too warm.

Bev. In such a cause, not to be warm, is to be frozen. Farewell. I 'll meet you at your lodgings.

Stu. Reflect a little:—the jewels may be lost: better not hazard 'em.——I was too pressing.

Bev. And I ungrateful. Reflection takes up time: I have no leisure for 't.—Within an hour expect me.

[*Exit* BEVERLEY.

Stu. The thoughtless, shallow prodigal! We shall have sport at night then.—But hold:—the jewels are not ours yet:—the lady may refuse 'em:—the husband may relent too:—'tis more than probable.——I 'll write a note to Beverley, and the contents shall spur him to demand 'em.——Bates and the rest think me this rogue thro' avarice. No; I have warmer motives,—Love and revenge.—Ruin the husband, and the wife's virtue may be bid for.

Enter BATES.

Look to your men, Bates; there 's money stirring. We meet to-night upon this spot. Hasten, and tell 'em so. Beverley calls upon me at my lodgings, and we return together. Hasten, I say; the rogues will scatter else.

Bates. Not 'till their leader bids 'em.

Stu. Give 'em the word, and follow me; I must advise with you.—This is a day of business. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Beverley's Lodgings.

Enter BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Your looks are chang'd too; there 's wildness in 'em. My wretched sister! How will it grieve her to see you thus!

Bev. No, no:—a little rest will ease me. And for your Lewson's kindness to her, it has my thanks; I have no more to give him.

Char. Yes, a sister and her fortune. I trifle with him, and he complains.—My looks, he says, are cold upon him. He thinks too—

Bev. That I have lost your fortune.—He dares not think so.

Char. Nor does he:—You are too quick at guessing. He cares not if you had: that care is mine.—I lent it you to husband; and now I claim it.

Bev. You have suspicions then.

Char. Cure 'em, and give it me.

Bev. To stop a sister's chiding.

Char. To vindicate her brother.

Bev. How if he need no vindication?

Char. I would fain hope so.

Bev. Ay, would, and cannot. Leave it to time then; 't will satisfy all doubts.

Char. Mine are already satisfy'd.

Bev. 'T is well. And when the subject is renew'd, speak to me like a sister, and I will answer like a brother.

Char. To tell me, I 'm a beggar.—Why, tell it now. I that can bear the ruin of those dearer to me, the ruin of a sister and her infant, can bear that too.

Bev. No more of this:—you wring my heart.

Char. 'Would that the misery were all your own! But innocence must suffer.—Unthinking rioter! whose home was heaven to him; an angel dwelt there, and a little cherub, that crown'd his days with blessings.—How he has lost this heaven, to league with devils!

Bev. Forbear, I say: Reproaches come too late; they search, but cure not: And for the fortune you demand, we'll talk to-morrow on't; our tempers may be milder.

Char. Or, if 't is gone, why farewell all. I claim'd it only for a sister.—But I 'll upbraid no more. What

heaven permits, perhaps, it may ordain; and sorrow then is sinful. Yet that the husband! Father! Brother! should be its instruments of vengeance!—'T is grievous to know that.

Bev. If you 're my sister, spare the remembrance,—it wounds too deeply. To-morrow shall clear all; and when the worst is known, it may be better than your fears. Comfort my wife; and for the pains of absence, I 'll make atonement. The world may yet go well with us. [*A knocking at the Door.*]

Char. Hark, she comes!—Look cheerfully upon her.—Affections such as hers are prying, and lend those eyes that read the soul.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* LEWSON.

Mrs. Bev. My life!

Bev. My love! how fares it? I have been a truant husband.

Mrs. Bev. But we meet now, and that heals all.—Doubts and alarms I have had; but in this dear embrace I bury and forget 'em.—My friend here has been indeed a friend. Charlotte, 't is you must thank him: Your brother's thanks and mine are of too little value.

Bev. Yet what we have we 'll pay. I thank you, sir, and am oblig'd. I would say more; but that your goodness to the wife, upbraids the husband's follies. Had I been wise, she had not trespass'd on your bounty.

Lew. Nor has she trespass'd. The little I have done, acceptance over-pays.

Char. So friendship thinks,—

Mrs. Bev. And doubles obligations, by striving to conceal 'em.—We 'll talk another time on't.—You are too thoughtful, love.

Bev. No; I have reason for these thoughts.

Char. And hatred for the cause?—'Would you had that too!

Bev. I have :—The cause was avarice.

Char. And who the tempter?

Bev. A ruin'd friend,—ruin'd by too much kindness.

Lew. Ay, worse than ruin'd; stabb'd in his fame, mortally stabb'd :—Riches can't cure him.

Bev. Or if they could, those I have drain'd him of. Something of this he hinted in the morning,—that Lewson had—Why these suspicions?

Lew. At school we knew this Stukely. A cunning plodding boy he was, sordid and cruel. Slow at his task, but quick at shifts and tricking. He schem'd out mischief, that others might be punish'd; and would tell his tale with so much art, that for the lash he merited, rewards and praise were given him. Show me a boy with such a mind, and time that ripens manhood in him, shall ripen vice too.—I'll prove him, and lay him open t' you :—'Till then be warn'd :—I know him, and therefore shun him.

Bev. As I would those that wrong him.—You are too busy, sir.

Mrs. Bev. No, not too busy :—mistaken perhaps :—That had been milder.

Lew. No matter, madam : I can bear this, and praise the heart that prompts it.—Pity such friendship should be so plac'd!

Bev. Again, sir?—But I'll bear, too.—You wrong him, Lewson, and w'll be sorry for 't.

Char. Ay, when 't is prov'd he wrongs him. The world is full of hypocrites.

Bev. And Stukely one :—so you 'd infer, I think.—I'll hear no more of this.—My heart akes for him : I have undone him.

Lew. The world says otherwise.

Bev. The world is false then.—I have business with you, love.—We 'll leave 'em to their rancour.

[*Going.*]

Char. No : We shall find room within for 't.—This way, sir.

Lew. Another time my friend will thank me:—that time is hastening too.

[*Exeunt* CHARLOTTE *and* LEWSON.

Bev. They hurt me beyond bearing.—Is Stukely false? Then honesty has left us. 'T were sinning against heaven to think so.

Mrs. Bev. I never doubted him.

Bev. No; you are charity. Meekness and ever-during patience live in that heart, and love that knows no change.—Why did I ruin you?

Mrs. Bev. You have not ruin'd me. I have no wants when you are present, nor wishes in your absence, but to be blest with your return. Be but resign'd to what has happen'd, and I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

Bev. My generous girl!—But memory will be busy; still crouding on my thoughts, to sour the present by the past. I have another pang too.

Mrs. Bev. Tell it, and let me cure it.

Bev. That friend,—that generous friend, whose fame they have traduc'd,—I have undone him too. While he had means, he lent me largely; and now, a prison must be his portion.

Mrs. Bev. No; I hope otherwise.

Bev. To hope, must be to act. The charitable wish feeds not the hungry. Something must be done.

Mrs. Bev. What?

Bev. In bitterness of heart he told me, just now he told me, I had undone him. Could I hear that, and think of happiness? No; I have disclaim'd it, while he is miserable.

Mrs. Bev. The world may mend with us, and then we may be grateful. There 's comfort in that hope.

Bev. Ay; 't is the sick man's cordial, his promis'd cure; while, in preparing it, the patient dies.—What now?

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. A letter, sir. [*Exit* LUCY.

Bev. The hand is Stukely's.

[*Opens, and reads it to himself.*]

Mrs. Bev. And brings good news:—at least, I'll hope so.—What says he, love?

Bev. Why this.—Too much for patience!—Yet he directs me to conceal it from you. [*Reads.*]

"Let your haste to see me, be the only proof of "your esteem for me. I have determin'd, since we "parted, to bid adieu to England; choosing rather "to forsake my country, than to owe my freedom in "it to the means we talk'd of. Keep this a secret at "home, and hasten to the ruin'd R. STUKELY."

Ruin'd by friendship.—I must relieve, or follow him.

Mrs. Bev. Follow him, did you say? Then I am lost, indeed!

Bev. O this infernal vice! how has it sunk me! A vice, whose highest joy was poor to my domestic happiness. Yet how have I pursu'd it! turn'd all my comforts to bitterest pangs! and all thy smiles to tears. Damn'd, damn'd infatuation!

Mrs. Bev. Be cool, my life! what are the means the letter talks of? Have you,—have I those means? Tell me, and ease me. I have no life, while you are wretched.

Bev. No, no; it must not be. 'T is I alone have sinn'd; 't is I alone must suffer. You shall reserve those means to keep my child and his wrong'd mother from want and wretchedness.

Mrs. Bev. What means?

Bev. I came, to rob you of 'em: But cannot,—dare not: Those jewels are your sole support,—I should be more than monster to request 'em.

Mrs. Bev. My jewels? Trifles, not worth the speak-

ing of, if weigh'd against a husband's peace: but let 'em purchase that, and the world's wealth is of less value.

Bev. How little do I seem before such virtues!

Mrs. Bev. No more, my love. I kept 'em, 'till occasion call'd to use 'em: now is the occasion, and I 'll resign 'em cheerfully.

Bev. Why, we 'll be rich in love then. But this excess of kindness melts me. Yet, for a friend, one would do much:—He has deny'd me nothing.

Mrs. Bev. Come to my closet.—But let him manage wisely. We have no more to give him.

Bev. Where learnt my love this excellence?—'T is heaven's own teaching: That heaven, which to an angel's form has given a mind more lovely. I am unworthy of you, but will deserve you better.

Henceforth my follies and neglects shall cease,
And all to come be penitence and peace:
Vice shall no more attract me with her charms,
Nor pleasure reach me, but in these dear arms.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Stukely's Lodgings.

Enter STUKELY *and* BATES.

Stu. So runs the world, Bates. Fools are the natural prey of knaves; nature design'd them so, when she made lambs for wolves. The laws that fear and

policy have fram'd, nature disclaims: she knows but two; and those are force and cunning. The nobler law is force; but then there 's danger in 't; while cunning, like a skilful miner, works safely and unseen.

Bates. And therefore wisely. Force must have nerves and sinews; cunning wants neither. The dwarf that has it, shall trip the giant's heels up.

Stu. And bind him to the ground. Why, we 'll erect a shrine for nature, and be her oracles. Conscience is weakness; fear made it, and fear maintains it. The dread of shame, inward reproaches, and fictitious burnings, swell out the phantom. Nature knows none of this: Her laws are freedom.

Bates. Sound doctrine, and well deliver'd.

Stu. We are sincere too, and practise what we teach. Let the grave pedant say as much.—But now to business. The jewels are dispos'd of; and Beverley again worth money. He waits to count his gold out, and then comes hither. If my design succeed, this night we finish with him. Go to your lodgings, and be busy.—You understand conveyances, and can make ruin sure.

Bates. Better stop here. The sale of this reversion may be talk'd of:—There's danger in 't.

Stu. No, 'tis the mark I aim at. We 'll thrive and laugh. You are the purchaser, and there 's the payment—[*Giving a Pocket-Book.*]—He thinks you rich; and so you shall be.—Enquire for titles, and deal hardly: 'Twill look like honesty.

Bates. How if he suspect us?

Stu. Leave it to me: I study hearts, and when to work upon 'em.—Go to your lodgings; and, if we come, be busy over papers. Talk of a thoughtless age, of gaming, and extravagance:—you have a face for 't.

Bates. [*Aside*] A feeling too, that would avoid it.—We push too far.—But I have caution'd you: if it end ill, you 'll think of me:—And so, adieu. [*Exit* Bates.

Stu. This fellow sins by halves; his fears are conscience to him: I'll turn these fears to use. Rogues that dread shame, will still be greater rogues, to hide their guilt. This shall be thought of.—Lewson grows troublesome: We must get rid of him: He knows too much.—I have a tale for Beverley; part of it truth too;—he shall call Lewson to account.—If it succeed, 'tis well; if not, we must try other means.

[*Knocking at the Door.*]

—But here he comes:—I must dissemble.—

Enter BEVERLEY.

Look to the door there!—My friend?—I thought of other visitors.

Bev. No; these shall guard you from 'em:—[*Offering him Notes.*] Take 'em, and use 'em cautiously:—The world deals hardly by us.

Stu. And shall I leave you destitute? No: your wants are the greatest. Another climate may treat me kinder. The shelter of to-night takes me from this.

Bev. Let these be your support then.—Yet is there need of parting? I may again have means; we'll share 'em, and live wisely.

Stu. No. I should tempt you on. Habit is nature in me; ruin can't cure it.—Even now I would be gaming: taught by experience as I am, and knowing, this poor sum is all that's left us, I am for venturing still.—And say, I am to blame:—Yet will this little supply our wants?—No, we must put it out to usury. Whether 't is madness in me, or some resistless impulse of good fortune, I yet am ignorant; but—

Bev. Take it, and succeed then: I'll try no more.

Stu. 'T is surely impulse; it pleads so strongly.—But you are cold.—We 'll e'en part here then. And for this last reserve, keep it for better uses; I'll have

none on 't. I thank you tho', and will seek fortune singly.—One thing I had forgot—

Bev. What is it?

Stu. Perhaps, 't were best forgotten. But I am open in my nature, and zealous for the honour of my friend.—Lewson speaks freely of you.

Bev. Of you, I know he does.

Stu. I can forgive him for 't: But for my friend, I'm angry.

Bev. What says he of me?

Stu. That Charlotte's fortune is embezzled:—He talks on 't loudly.

Bev. He shall be silenc'd then. How heard you of it?

Stu. From many: He question'd Bates about it: You must account with him, he says.

Bev. Or he with me;—and soon, too.

Stu. Speak mildly to him. Cautions are best.

Bev. I'll think on 't.—But whither go you?

Stu. From poverty and prisons:—no matter whither. If fortune change, you may hear from me.

Bev. May these be prosperous, then. [*Offering the Notes, which* STUKELY *refuses.*] Nay, they are yours:—I have sworn it, and will have nothing:—Take 'em, and use 'em.

Stu. Singly, I will not. My cares are for my friend; for his lost fortune, and ruin'd family: all separate interests I disclaim. Together we have fallen; together we must rise. My heart, my honour, and affections, all will have it so.

Bev. I am weary of being fool'd.

Stu. And so am I.—Here let us part then:—These bodings of good-fortune shall all be stifled; I 'll call 'em folly, and forget 'em.—This one embrace, and then farewell. [*Going to embrace* BEVERLEY.]

Bev. No; stay a moment.—I have these bodings too; but, whether caught from you, or prompted by

my good or evil genius, I know not:—The trial shall determine.—And yet, my wife!—

Stu. Ay, ay, she 'll chide.

Bev. No: my chidings are all here.

Stu. I 'll not persuade you.

Bev. I am persuaded; by reason, too,—the strongest reason,—Necessity. O! could I but regain the height I have fallen from, heaven should forsake me in my latest hour, if I again mix'd in these scenes, or sacrific'd the husband's peace, his joy and best affections, to avarice and infamy.

Stu. I have resolv'd like you; and, since our motives are so honest, why should we fear success?

Bev. Come on then:—Where shall we meet?

Stu. At Wilson's.—Yet, if it hurt you, leave me: I have misled you often.

Bev. We have misled each other.—But come! fortune is fickle, and may be tir'd with plaguing us:—There let us rest our hopes.

Stu. Yet think a little.

Bev. I cannot;—thinking but distracts me:—
When desperation leads, all thoughts are vain;
Reason would lose, what rashness may obtain.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Beverley's Lodgings.

Enter CHARLOTTE *and Mrs.* BEVERLEY.

Char. 'T was all a scheme, a mean one; unworthy of my brother.

Mrs. Bev. No, I am sure it was not.—Stukely is honest too; I know he is.—This madness has undone 'em both.

Char. My brother irrecoverably.—You are too spiritless a wife:—A mournful tale, mixt with a few kind words, will steal away your soul. The world's

too subtle for such goodness. Had I been by, he should have ask'd your life sooner than those jewels.

Mrs. Bev. He should have had it then. I live but to oblige him. She who can love, and is belov'd like me, will do as much. Men have done more for mistresses, and women for a base deluder. And shall a wife do less? Your chidings hurt me, Charlotte.

Char. And come too late; they might have sav'd you else. How could he use you so!

Mrs. Bev. 'T was friendship did it. His heart was breaking for a friend.

Char. The friend that has betray'd him.

Mrs. Bev. 'Pr'ythee, don't think so.

Char. To-morrow he accounts with me.

Mrs. Bev. And fairly:—I will not doubt it.

Char. Unless a friend has wanted.—I have no patience,—Sister! sister! we are bound to curse this friend.

Mrs. Bev. My Beverley speaks nobly of him.

Char. And Lewson truly.—But I displease you with this talk.—To-morrow will instruct us.

Mrs. Bev. Stay till it comes then.—I would not think so hardly.

Char. Nor I, but from conviction.—Yet we have hope of better days. My uncle is infirm, and of an age that threatens hourly:—Or if he live, you never have offended him; and for distresses so unmerited he will have pity.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, and am cheerful.

Char. My Lewson will be kind too. While he and I have life and means, you shall divide with us.—And see, he 's here.—

Enter LEWSON.

Mrs. Bev. We were just speaking of you.

Lew. 'T is best to interrupt you then. Few characters will bear a scrutiny; and, where the bad outweighs the good, he 's safest that's least talk'd of. What say you, madam?

Char. That I hate scandal, tho' a woman; therefore talk seldom of you.

Mrs. Bev. Or, with more truth, that, tho' a woman, she loves to praise; therefore talks always of you.—I 'll leave you to decide it. [*Exit Mrs.* BEVERLEY.

Lew. I come, to talk in private with you,—of matters that concern you.

Char. What matters?

Lew. First, answer me sincerely to what I ask.

Char. I will:—Propose your question.

Lew. 'T is now a tedious twelve-month, since with an open and kind heart you said, you lov'd me:—And when, in consequence of such sweet words, I press'd for marriage, you gave a voluntary promise that you would live for me.

Char. You think me chang'd then?

Lew. I did not say so.—This is my question;—and with such plainness as I ask it, I shall entreat an answer;—Have you repented of this promise?

Char. Stay, sir:—First, answer me:—Why am I doubted?

Lew. My doubts are of myself. If, from my temper, my words or actions, you have conceiv'd a thought against me, or even a wish for separation, all that has pass'd is nothing.

Char. You startle me.—Yes, I will answer you:—Your doubts are prophecies:—I am really chang'd.

Lew. Indeed!

Char. I could torment you now, as you have me; but it is not in my nature.—That I am chang'd, I own: for what at first was inclination, is now grown reason in me; and from that reason, had I the world,—nay, were I poorer than the poorest, and you too wanting bread, with but a hovel to invite me too,—I would be yours, and happy.

Lew. My kindest Charlotte!—[*Takes her hand.*]—Thanks are too poor for this, and words too weak.—

Why,—tell me,—why should our union any longer be delay'd?

Char. For happier times: the present are too wretched.

Lew. I may have reasons that press it now.

Char. What reasons?

Lew. The strongest reasons; unanswerable ones.

Char. Be quick, and name 'em.

Lew. First, consent that you to-morrow will be mine for ever.

Char. I do,—tho' misery should succeed.—And now, this secret that alarms me?

Lew. Your fortune's lost.

Char. My fortune lost!—I'll study to be humble then. But, was my promise claim'd for this? How nobly generous!—Where learnt you this sad news?

Lew. From Bates, Stukely's prime agent:—I have oblig'd him, and he's grateful:—He told it me in friendship, to warn me from my Charlotte.

Char. 'T was honest in him, and I 'll esteem him for 't.

Lew. This is the time, I am to meet him again.—He knows much more than he has told.

Char. For me, it is enough: And, for your generous love, I thank you from my soul.

Lew. To-morrow then, you fix my happiness.

Char. All that I can, I will.

Lew. It must be so; we live but for each other.—Keep what you know a secret: and, when we meet to-morrow, more may be known.—'Till then, farewell! [*Exit* LEWSON.

Char. My poor, poor sister! How would this wound her! But I 'll conceal it, and speak comfort to her.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Gaming-House.

Enter STUKELY *and* BEVERLEY.

Bev. Whither would you lead me?

Stu. Where we may vent our curses.

Bev. Ay, on yourself, and those damn'd counsels that have destroy'd me. Ten thousand fiends were in that bosom, and all let loose to tempt me,—I had resisted else.

Stu. Go on, sir:—I have deserv'd this from you.

Bev. And curses everlasting:—time is too scanty for 'em.

Stu. What have I done?

Bev. What the arch-fiend of old did,—sooth'd with false hopes, for certain ruin.

Stu. Myself unhurt; nay, pleas'd at your destruction:—So your words mean. Why, tell it to the world: I am too poor to find a friend in 't.

Bev. A friend! What 's he? I had a friend.

Stu. And have one still.

Bev. Ay; I 'll tell you of this friend. He found me happiest of the happy; fortune and honour crown'd me; and love and peace liv'd in my heart: one spark of folly lurk'd there: that too he found; and by deceitful breath blew it to flames that have consum'd me. This friend were you to me.

Stu. A little more, perhaps:—The friend who gave his all to save you; and not succeeding, chose ruin with you: but no matter.—I have undone you, and am a villain.

Bev. No; I think not:—The villains are within.

Stu. What villains!

Bev. Dawson, and the rest.—We have been dupes to sharpers.

Stu. How know you this? I have had doubts as well as you; yet still, as fortune chang'd, I blush'd at my own thoughts:—But you have proofs, perhaps.

Bev. Ay, damn'd ones;—repeated losses,—night after night,—and no reverse:—Chance has no hand in this.

Stu. I think more charitably; yet I am peevish in my nature, and apt to doubt.—The world speaks fairly of this Dawson; so does it of the rest: we have watch'd 'em closely too.—But 't is a right usurp'd by losers, to think the winners knaves.—We 'll have more manhood in us.

Bev. I know not what to think. This night has stung me to the quick:—Blasted my reputation too: I have bound my honour to these vipers; play'd meanly upon credit, 'till I tir'd 'em; and now they shun me, to rifle one another. What 's to be done?

Stu. Nothing: my counsels have been fatal.

Bev. By heaven, I 'll not survive this shame.—Traitor! 't is you have brought it on me:—(*Seizing him.*)—Show me the means to save me; or I 'll commit a murder here, and next upon myself.

Stu. Why do it then, and rid me of ingratitude.

Bev. 'Pr'ythee forgive this language:—I speak I know not what.—Rage and despair are in my heart, and hurry me to madness. My home is horror to me—I 'll not return to 't. Speak quickly; tell me if in this wreck of fortune one hope remains? Name it, and be my oracle.

Stu. To vent your curses on: you have bestow'd 'm liberally.—Take your own counsel: and, should a desperate hope present itself, 't will suit your desperate fortune. I 'll not advise you.

Bev. What hope? By heaven, I 'll catch at it, however desperate. I am so sunk in misery, it cannot lay me lower.

Stu. You have an uncle.

Bev. Ay, what of him?

Stu. Old men live long by temperance; while their heirs starve on expectation.

Bev. What mean you?

Stu. That the reversion of his estate is yours; and will bring money to pay debts with:—Nay more, it may retrieve what 's past.

Bev. Or leave my child a beggar.

Stu. And what 's his father? A dishonourable one; engag'd for sums he cannot pay.—That should be thought of.

Bev. It is my shame, the poison that enflames me. Where shall we go? To whom? I am impatient, 'till all 's lost.

Stu. All may be yours again.—Your man is Bates:—He has large funds at his command, and will deal justly by you.

Bev. I am resolv'd.—Tell 'em within, we 'll meet 'em presently; and with full purses too.—Come, follow me.

Stu. No. I 'll have no hand in this; nor do I counsel it.—Use your discretion, and act from that.—You 'll find me at my lodgings.

Bev. Succeed what will, this night I 'll dare the worst:
'T is loss of fear, to be completely curs'd.

[*Exit* BEVERLEY.

Stu. Why, lose it then for ever. Fear is the mind's worst evil; and 't is a friendly office to drive it from the bosom.—Thus far has fortune crown'd me.—Yet Beverley is rich; rich in his wife's best treasure, her honour and affections: I wou'd supplant him there too.—A tale of art may do much.—Charlotte is sometimes absent. The seeds of jealousy are sown already. If I mistake not, they have taken root too. Now is the time to ripen 'em, and reap the harvest. The softest of her sex, if wrong'd in love, or thinking that she's wrong'd, becomes a tygress in revenge.——

I'll instantly to Beverley's.—No matter for the danger.—When beauty leads us on, 't is indiscretion to reflect, and cowardice to doubt. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Beverley's Lodgings.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. Did Charlotte tell you any thing?

Lucy. No, madam.

Mrs. Bev. She look'd confus'd, methought; said, she had business with her Lewson; which when I press'd to know, tears only were her answer.

Lucy. She seem'd in haste too:—Yet her return may bring you comfort.

Mrs. Bev. No, my good girl; I was not born for 't.—But why do I distress thee? Thy kind heart bleeds for the ills of others.—What pity that thy mistress can't reward thee! But there's a power above, that sees, and will remember all.—[*Knocking at the Door.*]—Hark! there's some one entering.

Lucy. Perhaps, my master, madam. [*Exit* LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. Let him be well too, and I am satisfy'd. [*Goes to the Door, and listens.*] No; 't is another's voice.

Enter LUCY *and* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr. Stukely, madam. [*Exit* LUCY.

Stu. To meet you thus alone, madam, was what I wish'd. Unseasonable visits, when friendship warrants 'em, need no excuse:—therefore I make none.

Mrs. Bev. What mean you, sir? And where's your friend?

Stu. Men may have secrets, madam, which their

best friends are not admitted to. We parted in the morning, not soon to meet again.

Mrs. Bev. You mean to leave us then? To leave your country too? I am no stranger to your reasons, and pity your misfortunes.

Stu. Your pity has undone you. Could Beverley do this? That letter was a forg'd one; a mean contrivance to rob you of your jewels:—I wrote it not.

Mrs. Bev. Impossible!—Whence came it then?

Stu. Wrong'd as I am, madam, I must speak plainly,———

Mrs. Bev. Do so, and ease me. Your hints have troubled me. Reports, you say, are stirring.—Reports of whom? You wish'd me not to credit 'em. What, sir, are these reports?

Stu. I thought 'em slander, madam; and caution'd you in friendship; lest from officious tongues the tale had reach'd you with double aggravation.

Mrs. Bev. Proceed, sir.

Stu. It is a debt due to my fame, due to an injur'd wife too:—We both are injur'd.

Mrs. Bev. How injur'd? and who has injur'd us?

Stu. My friend, your husband.

Mrs. Bev. You would resent for both then? But know, sir, my injuries are my own, and do not need a champion.

Stu. Be not too hasty, madam. I come not in resentment, but for acquittance.—You thought me poor; and to the feign'd distresses of a friend gave up your jewels.

Mrs. Bev. I gave 'em to a husband.

Stu. Who gave 'em to a ———

Mrs. Bev. What? Whom did he give 'em to?

Stu. A mistress.

Mrs. Bev. No; on my life, he did not.

Stu. Himself confess'd it, with curses on her avarice.

Mrs. Bev. I 'll not believe it.—He has no mistress;—or, if he has, why is it told to me?

Stu. To guard you against insults. He told me that to move you to compliance, he forg'd that letter, pretending I was ruin'd, ruin'd by him too. The fraud succeeded; and what a trusting wife bestow'd in pity, was lavish'd on a wanton.

Mrs. Bev. Then I am lost indeed, and my afflictions are too powerful for me.—His follies I have borne without upbraiding, and saw the approach of poverty without a tear:—my affection, my strong affection supported me through every trial.

Stu. Be patient, madam.

Mrs. Bev. Patient! The barbarous, ungrateful man! And does he think that the tenderness of my heart is his best security for wounding it? But he shall find that injuries such as these, can arm my weakness for vengeance and redress.

Stu. [*Aside*] Ha! then I may succeed.——Redress is in your power.

Mrs. Bev. What redress?

Stu. Forgive me, madam, if, in my zeal to serve you, I hazard your displeasure.——Think of your wretched state: already want surrounds you. Is it in patience to bear that? To see your helpless little one robb'd of his birth-right? A sister, too, with unavailing tears, lamenting her lost fortune? No comfort left you, but ineffectual pity from the few, outweigh'd by insults from the many.

Mrs. Bev. Am I so lost a creature?—Well, sir, my redress?

Stu. To be resolv'd, is to secure it. The marriage vow, once violated, is in the sight of heaven dissolv'd. Start not, but hear me.—'T is now the summer of your youth; time has not cropt the roses from your cheek, tho' sorrow long has wash'd 'em:—then use your beauty wisely; and, freed by injuries, fly from the cruellest of men, for shelter with the kindest.

Mrs. Bev. And who is he?

Stu. A friend to the unfortunate; a bold one, too; who, while the storm is bursting on your brow, and lightning flashing from your eyes, dares tell you that he loves you.

Mrs. Bev. 'Would that these eyes had heaven's own lightning, that, with a look, thus I might blast thee!—O villain! villain!—But now I know thee, and thank thee for the knowledge.

Stu. If you are wise, you shall have cause to thank me.

Mrs. Bev. An injur'd husband too shall thank thee.

Stu. Yet know, proud woman, I have a heart as stubborn as your own; as haughty and imperious; and as it loves, so can it hate.

Mrs. Bev. Mean, despicable villain! I scorn thee and thy threats.—Was it for this that Beverley was false,—that his too credulous wife shou'd in despair and vengeance give up her honour to a wretch? But he shall know it, and vengeance shall be his.

Stu. Why send him for defiance then. Tell him, I love his wife; but that a worthless husband forbids our union. I'll make a widow of you, and court you honourably.

Mrs. Bev. O coward! coward! thy soul will shrink at him.—Yet, in the thought of what may happen, I feel a woman's fears. Keep thy own secret, and begone.—Who's there?—

Enter LUCY.

Your absence, sir, would please me.

Stu. I'll not offend you, madam.

[*Exeunt* STUKELY *and* LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. Why opens not the earth to swallow such a monster? Be conscience then his punisher, 'till heaven in mercy give him penitence, or doom him in his justice. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Stukely's Lodgings.

Enter STUKELY *and* BATES.

Bates. YOUR men have done their business, and Beverley is beggar'd of his last resource.—Where have you been?

Stu. Fooling my time away:—playing my tricks, like a tame monkey, to entertain a woman:—No matter where.—But tell me more of Beverley.—How bore he the loss of his last stake?

Bates. Like one, so Dawson says, whose senses had been numb'd with misery.—When all was lost, he fixt his eyes upon the ground, and stood some time, with folded arms, stupid and motionless. Then, snatching his sword that hung against the wainscot, he sat him down again by the gaming table; and, with a look of fixt attention, drew figures on the floor:—at last he started up, look'd wild and trembled; then, like a woman, seiz'd with her sex's fits, laugh'd out aloud, while the tears trickled down his face:—so left the room.

Stu. Why, this was madness.

Bates. The madness of despair.

Stu. We must confine him then. A prison wou'd do well.—[*A knocking at the Door*]—Hark! that knocking may be his.—Go that way down.—

[*Exit* BATES.

Who 's there?

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. An enemy,—an open and avow'd one.

Stu. Why am I thus broke in upon? This house is

mine, sir; and should protect me from insult and ill-manners.

Lew. Guilt has no place of sanctuary; wherever found, 't is virtue's lawful game. The fox's hold, and tyger's den, are no security against the hunter.

Stu. Your business, sir?

Lew. To tell you that I know you.—Why this confusion,—that look of guilt and terror?—Is Beverley awake? Or has his wife told tales? The man that dares like you, should have a soul to justify his deeds, and courage to confront accusers;—not, with a coward's fear, thus shrink beneath reproof.

Stu. Who waits there?

Lew. [*Shuts the door.*] He dies, that interrupts us.—You should have weigh'd your strength, sir; and then, instead of climbing to high fortune, the world had mark'd you for what you are, a little paultry villain.

Stu. You think, I fear you.

Lew. I know, you fear me. This is to prove it. [*Pulls him by the sleeve.*] You wanted privacy: a lady's presence took up your attention. Now we are alone, sir.—Why, what a wretch! [*Flings him from him.*] The vilest insect in creation will turn, when trampled on.—Yet has this thing undone a man,—by cunning and mean arts, undone him.—But we have found you, sir; trac'd you thro' all your labyrinths. If you would save yourself, fall to confession: no mercy will be shown else.

Stu. First, prove me what you think me:—'till then, your threatenings are in vain.—And for this insult, vengeance may yet be mine.

Lew. Infamous coward! why take it now then.—[*Draws, and* STUKELY *retires.*] Alas! I pity thee.—Yet that a wretch like this should overcome a Beverley! it fills me with astonishment!—A wretch, so mean of soul, that even desperation cannot animate him to look upon an enemy.—You shou'd not thus have

tower'd, sir; unless, like others of your black profession, you had a sword to keep the fools in awe, your villany has ruined.

Stu. Villany! 'Twere best to curb this licence of your tongue; for know, sir, while there are laws, this outrage on my reputation will not be borne with.

Lew. Laws! dar'st thou seek shelter from the laws,—those laws, which thou and thy infernal crew live in the constant violation of? Talk'st thou of reputation too,—when, under friendship's sacred name, thou hast betray'd, robb'd, and destroy'd?

Stu. Ay, rail at gaming; 't is a rich topic, and affords noble declamation.—Go, preach against it in the city; you'll find a congregation in every tavern: If they should laugh at you, fly to my lord, and sermonise it there; he 'll thank you, and reform.

Lew. And will example sanctify a vice? No, wretch; the custom of my lord, or of the Cit that apes him, cannot excuse a breach of law, or make the gamester's calling reputable.

Stu. Rail on, I say.—But, is this zeal for beggar'd Beverley? Is it for him that I am treated thus? No; he and his wife might both have groan'd in prison, had but the sister's fortune escap'd the wreck, to have rewarded the disinterested love of honest Mr. Lewson.

Lew. How I detest thee for the thought! But thou art lost to every human feeling. Yet let me tell thee —and may it wring thy heart!—that, tho' my friend is ruin'd by thy snares, thou hast unknowingly been kind to me.

Stu. Have I? It was, indeed, unknowingly.

Lew. Thou hast assisted me in love; given me the merit that I wanted; since, but for thee, my Charlotte had not known, 't was her dear self I sigh'd for, and not her fortune.

Stu. Thank me, and take her then.

Lew. And, as a brother to poor Beverley, I will

pursue the robber that has stript him, and snatch him from his gripe.

Stu. Then know, imprudent man, he is within my gripe; and, should my friendship for him be slander'd once again, the hand that has supply'd him, shall fall and crush him.

Lew. Why, now there 's a spirit in thee! This is indeed to be a villain! But I shall reach thee yet:—Fly where thou wilt, my vengeance shall pursue thee:—And Beverley shall yet be sav'd, be sav'd from thee, thou monster; nor owe his rescue to his wife's dishonour. [*Exit* LEWSON.

Stu. [*Pausing*] Then ruin has enclos'd me.—Curse on my coward heart! I would be bravely villanous; but 't is my nature to shrink at danger, and he has found me. Yet fear brings caution, and that, security.—More mischief must be done, to hide the past.—Look to yourself, officious Lewson;—there may be danger stirring.—How now, Bates?

Enter BATES.

Bates. What is the matter? 'T was Lewson, and not Beverley, that left you. I heard him loud. You seem alarm'd too.

Stu. Ay, and with reason: we are discover'd.

Bates. I fear'd as much, and therefore caution'd you.—But you were peremptory.

Stu. Thus fools talk ever; spending their idle breath on what is past, and trembling at the future. We must be active. Beverley, at worst, is but suspicious; but Lewson's genius, and his hate to me, will lay all open. Means must be found to stop him.

Bates. What means?

Stu. Despatch him.—Nay, start not:—Desperate occasions call for desperate deeds.—We live but by his death.

Bates. You cannot mean it?

Stu. I do, by heaven.

Bates. Good-night, then.

Stu. Stay, I must be heard,—then answer'd. Perhaps, the motion was too sudden: and human weakness starts at murder; tho' strong necessity compels it. I have thought long of this; and my first feelings were like yours; a foolish conscience aw'd me, which soon I conquer'd. The man that wou'd undo me, nature cries out, undo. Brutes know their foes by instinct; and, where superior force is given, they use it for destruction. Shall man do less? Lewson pursues us to our ruin; and shall we, with the means to crush him, fly from our hunter?—or turn and tear him? 'T is folly even to hesitate.

Bates. He has oblig'd me, and I dare not.

Stu. Why, live to shame then, to beggary and punishment. You would be privy to the deed; yet want the soul to act it. Nay more; had my designs been levell'd at his fortune, you had stept in the foremost. —And what is life without its comforts? Those you would rob him of; and, by a lingering death, add cruelty to murder. Henceforth, adieu to half-made villains: there 's danger in 'em.—What you have got is yours; keep it, and hide with it:—I 'll deal my future bounty to those that merit it.

Bates. What 's the reward?

Stu. Equal division of our gains. I swear it, and will be just.

Bates. Think of the means then.

Stu. He 's gone to Beverley's.—Wait for him in the street: 't is a dark night, and fit for mischief:—A dagger would be useful.

Bates. He sleeps no more.

Stu. Consider the reward.—When the deed 's done, I have further business with you. Send Dawson to me.

Bates. Think it already done.—And so, farewell.

[*Exit* Bates.

Stu. Why, farewell Lewson then; and farewell to my fears:—This night secures me. I 'll wait the event within. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. How like an out-cast do I wander,—loaded with every curse that drives the soul to desperation!—Whither am I going?—My home lies there; all that is dear on earth it holds too; yet are the gates of death more welcome to me: I'll enter it no more.—Who passes here? 'Tis Lewson.—He meets me in a gloomy hour: and memory tells me, he has been meddling with my fame.

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. Beverley!—Well met. I have been busy in your affairs.

Bev. So I have heard, sir; and now must thank you as I ought.

Lew. To-morrow I may deserve your thanks. Late as it is, I go to Bates. Discoveries are making that an arch villain trembles at.

Bev. Discoveries are made, sir, that you shall tremble at. Where is this boasted spirit, this high demeanour, that was to call me to account? You say, I have wrong'd my sister: now say as much:—But first, be ready for defence, as I am for resentment.

[*Draws.*]

Lew. What mean you? I understand you not.

Bev. The coward's stale acquittance;—who, when he spreads foul calumny abroad, and dreads just vengeance on him, cries out,—What mean you, I understand you not.

Lew. Coward and calumny! Whence are those words? But I forgive, and pity you.

Bev. Your pity had been kinder to my fame: But you have traduc'd it; told a vile story to the public ear, that I have wrong'd my sister.

Lew. 'T is false. Show me the man that dares accuse me.

Bev. I thought you brave, and of a soul superior to low malice; but I have found you, and will have vengeance. This is no place for argument.

Lew. Nor shall it be for violence. Imprudent man! who, in revenge for fancy'd injuries, would pierce the heart that loves him. But honest friendship acts from itself, unmov'd by slander, or ingratitude. The life you thirst for, shall be employ'd to serve you.—You know me not.

Bev. Yes; for the slanderer of my fame, who, under show of friendship, arraigns me of injustice,—buzzing in every ear foul breach of trust, and family dishonour.

Lew. Have I done this? Who told you so?

Bev. The world:—'T is talk'd of every where. It pleas'd you to add threats too: you were to call me to account:—Why, do it now then: I shall be proud of such an arbiter.

Lew. Put up your sword, and know me better. I never injur'd you. The base suggestion comes from Stukely. I see him, and his aims.

Bev. What aims? I'll not conceal it: 'T was Stukely that accus'd you.

Lew. To rid him of an enemy:—perhaps, of two:—he fears discovery, and frames a tale of falsehood, to ground revenge and murder on.

Bev. I must have proof of this.

Lew. Wait till to-morrow then.

Bev. I will.

Lew. Good night.——I go to serve you.—Forget what's past, as I do; and cheer your family with smiles. Oh, that to-morrow may confirm 'em, and make all happy! [*Exit* Lewson.

Bev. [*Pausing*] How vile and how absurd is man! His boasted honour is but another name for pride; which easier bears the consciousness of guilt, than

the world's just reproofs. But 't is the fashion of the times; and, in defence of falsehood and false honour, men die martyrs. I knew not that my nature was so bad. [*Stands musing.*]

Enter JARVIS *and* BATES.

Jar. This way the noise was,—and yonder's my poor master.

Bates. I heard him at high words with Lewson.

Jar. I heard him too. Misfortunes vex him.

Bates. Go to him, and lead him home.—But he comes this way.——I 'll not be seen by him.

[*Exit* BATES.

Bev. What fellow's that? Art thou a murderer, friend? Come, lead the way. I have a hand as mischievous as thine; a heart as desperate too.—Jarvis! —To bed, old man, the cold will chill thee.

Jar. Why are you wandering at this late hour?—Your sword drawn too!—For heaven's sake, sheathe it, sir!—The sight distracts me.

Bev. Whose voice was that?

Jar. 'T was mine, sir. Let me intreat you to give the sword to me.

Bev. Ay, take it, quickly take it:—perhaps, I am not so curs'd, but heaven may have sent thee at this moment, to snatch me from perdition.

Jar. Then I am bless'd.

Bev. Continue so, and leave me; my sorrows are contagious: No one is blest that 's near me.

Jar. I came, to seek you, sir.

Bev. And now thou hast found me, leave me.—My thoughts are wild, and will not be disturb'd.

Jar. Such thoughts are best disturb'd.

Bev. I tell thee that they will not.——Who sent thee hither?

Jar. My weeping mistress.—Forget your griefs, and let me lead you to her. The streets are dangerous.

Bev. Be wise, and leave me then. The night's black horrors are suited to my thoughts. These stones shall be my resting place:—[*Lies down*]—here shall my soul brood o'er its miseries; 'till with the fiends of hell, and guilty of the earth, I start and tremble at the morning's light.

Jar. For pity's sake, sir!—Upon my knees, I beg you to quit this place, and these sad thoughts: let patience, not despair, possess you!—Rise, I beseech you.—There 's not a moment of your absence, that my poor mistress does not groan for.

Bev. Have I undone her, and is she still so kind?—[*Starting up*]—It is too much:—my brain can't hold.—O, Jarvis, how desperate is that wretch's state, whom only death or madness can relieve!

Jar. Appease his mind, good heaven, and give him resignation! Alas, sir, if beings in the other world perceive the events of this, how will your parents' blessed spirits grieve for you, even in heaven!—Let me conjure you by their honour'd memories, by the sweet innocence of your yet helpless child, and by the ceaseless sorrows of my poor mistress, to rouse your manhood, and struggle with these griefs.

Bev. Thou virtuous, good old man, thy tears and thy entreaties have reach'd my heart, thro' all its miseries.

Jar. Be but resign'd, sir, and happiness may yet be yours.—Hark! I hear voices.—This way, this way; and we may reach home unnotic'd.

Bev. Unnotic'd, didst thou say? Alas! I dread no looks, but of those wretches I have made at home. O! had I listen'd to thy honest warnings, no earthly blessing had been wanting to me!—I was so happy, that even a wish for more than I possess'd, was arrogant presumption. But I have warr'd against the power that bless'd me, and now am sentenc'd to the hell I merit. [*Exeunt* Beverley *and* Jarvis.

SCENE III.

Stukely's Lodgings.

Enter STUKELY.

Stu. My limbs are on the rack, and my soul shivers in me, 'till this night's business be complete.—

Enter DAWSON.

Dawson, thou 'rt welcome.—Tell me,—is Bates determin'd, or does he waver?

Daw. At first, he seem'd irresolute; wish'd the employment had been mine; and mutter'd curses on his coward hand, that trembled at the deed.

Stu. And did he leave you so?

Daw. No. We walk'd together; and, shelter'd by the darkness, saw Beverley and Lewson in warm debate; but soon they cool'd: and then I left 'em, to hasten hither;—but not 'till 't was resolv'd, Lewson shou'd die.

Stu. Thy words have given me life.—That quarrel too was fortunate; for, if my hopes deceive me not, it promises a grave to Beverley.

Daw. You misconceive me. Lewson and he were friends.

Stu. But my prolific brain shall make 'em enemies. If Lewson fall, he falls by Beverley. An upright jury shall decree it.—Ask me no question; but do as I direct.—This writ,—[*Takes out a Pocket-Book*]—for some days past, I have treasur'd here, 'till a convenient time call'd for its use: that time is come. Take it, and give it to an officer: it must be serv'd this instant.

Daw. On Beverley?

Stu. Look at it. 'Tis for the sums that I have lent him.

Daw. Must he to prison then?

Stu. I ask obedience; not replies. This night, a jail must be his lodging. 'Tis probable, he's not gone home yet. Wait at his door, and see it executed.

Daw. Upon a beggar? He has no means of payment.

Stu. Dull and insensible! If Lewson dies, who was it kill'd him? Why, he that was seen quarrelling with him; and I, that knew of Beverley's intents, arrested him in friendship:—a little late, perhaps; but 't was a virtuous act, and men will thank me for it. Now, sir, you understand me?

Daw. Most perfectly:—and will about it.

Stu. Haste then; and, when 't is done, come back and tell me.

Daw. 'Till then, farewell. [*Exit* DAWSON.

Stu. Now tell thy tale, fond wife! And Lewson, if again thou canst insult me, I'll kneel and own thee for my master.

Not avarice now, but vengeance fires my breast,
And one short hour must make me curst or blest.
[*Exit.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

The SCENE *continues.*

Enter STUKELY, BATES, *and* DAWSON.

Bates. POOR Lewson!—The horrors of last night!—The thought of him is dreadful to me.

Stu. In the street, did you say? And no one near him?

Bates. By his own door: he was leading me to his house: I pretended business with him, and stabb'd him to the heart, while he was reaching at the bell.

Stu. And did he fall so suddenly?

Bates. The repetition pleases you, I see. I told you, he fell without a groan.

Stu. What heard you of him this morning?

Bates. That the watch found him, and alarm'd the servants. I mingled with the crowd just now, and saw him dead in his own house.—The sight terrify'd me.

Stu. Away with terrors, 'till his ghost rise and accuse us.—We have no living enemy to fear; unless 't is Beverley; and him we have lodg'd safe in prison.

Bates. Must he be murder'd too?

Stu. No; I have a scheme to make the law his murderer.—At what hour did Lewson fall?

Bates. The clock struck twelve, as I turn'd to leave him. 'T was a melancholy bell, I thought tolling for his death.

Stu. The time was lucky for us.—Beverley was arrested at one, you say?

Daw. Exactly.

Stu. Good. We 'll talk of this presently.—The women were with him, I think?

Daw. And old Jarvis. I would have told you of 'em last night, but your thoughts were too busy. 'T is well you have a heart of stone, the tale would melt it else.

Stu. Out with it then.

Daw. I trac'd him to his lodgings; and, pretending pity for his misfortunes, kept the door open, while the officers seiz'd him. 'T was a damn'd deed:—but no matter:—I follow'd my instructions.

Stu. And what said he?

Daw. He upbraided me with treachery; call'd you

a villain; acknowledged the sums you had lent him, and submitted to his fortune.

Stu. And the women?—

Daw. For a few minutes, astonishment kept 'em silent:—They look'd wildly at one another, while the tears stream'd down their cheeks. But rage and fury soon gave 'em words; and then, in the very bitterness of despair, they curs'd me, and the monster that had employ'd me.

Stu. And you bore it with philosophy?

Daw. 'Till the scene chang'd, and then I melted. I order'd the officers to take away their prisoner. The women shriek'd, and would have follow'd him; but we forbade 'em. 'T was then they fell upon their knees, with all the eloquence of misery endeavouring to soften us. I never felt compassion, 'till that moment; and, had the officers been mov'd like me, we had left the business undone, and fled with curses on ourselves: but their hearts were steel'd by custom: they tore him from their arms, and lodg'd him in prison, with only Jarvis to comfort him.

Stu. There let him lie, 'till we have further business with him. You saw him quarrelling with Lewson in the street last night?

Bates. I did: His steward, Jarvis, saw him too.

Stu. And shall attest it. Here's matter to work upon: An unwilling evidence carries weight with him. Something of my design I have hinted to you before.—Beverley must be the author of this murder; and we the parties to convict him.—But how to proceed, will require time and thought. Come along with me.—But no compassion, sir:—[*To* Dawson]—We want leisure for 't.—This way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Beverley's Lodgings.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. No news of Lewson yet?

Char. None. He went out early, and knows not what has happen'd.

Mrs. Bev. The clock strikes eight:—I 'll wait no longer.

Char. Stay, but 'till Jarvis comes. He has sent twice, to stop us, 'till we see him.

Mrs. Bev. I have no life in this separation.—O, what a night was last night! I would not pass another such, to purchase worlds by it.—My poor Beverley too! What must he have felt! the very thought distracts me.—To have him torn at midnight from me!—a loathsome prison his habitation! a cold damp room his lodging! the bleak winds, perhaps, blowing upon his pillow! no fond wife to lull him to his rest! and no reflections but to wound and tear him!—'T is too horrible.—I wanted love for him, or they had not forc'd him from me:—they should have parted soul and body first:—I was too tame.

Char. All that we could, we did; and Jarvis did the rest: the faithful creature will give him comfort.—See where he comes:—his looks are cheerful too.

Enter JARVIS.

Mrs. Bev. Are tears then cheerful? Alas, he weeps! Speak to him Charlotte:—I have no tongue to ask him questions.

Char. How does your master, Jarvis?

Jar. I am old and foolish, madam; and tears will come before my words:—But don't you weep;—[*To Mrs.* BEVERLEY]—I have a tale of joy for you.

Mrs. Bev. Say but, he 's well, and I have joy enough.

Jar. His mind too shall be well,—all shall be well:—I have news for him that shall make his poor heart bound again.—Fie upon old age!—how childish it makes me! I have a tale of joy for you, and my tears drown it.

Mrs. Bev. What is it, Jarvis?

Jar. Yet why should I rejoice, when a good man dies? Your uncle, madam, dy'd yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. My uncle!—O heavens!

Char. How heard you of his death?

Jar. His steward came express, madam:—I met him in the street, enquiring for your lodgings.—I should not rejoice, perhaps,—But he was old, and my poor master a prisoner.—Now he shall live again. O, 't is a brave fortune! and 't was death to me, to see him a prisoner.

Char. Where did you leave the steward?

Jar. I wou'd not bring him hither, to be a witness of your distresses: and besides, I wanted, once before I die, to be the messenger of joy t' you. My good master will be a man again.

Char. I have no joy, 'till my poor brother shares it with me. How did he pass the night, Jarvis?

Jar. Why now, madam, I can tell you. Like a man dreaming of death and horrors. When they led him to his cell,—for 't was a poor apartment for my master,—he flung himself upon a wretched bed, and lay speechless 'till day-break. A sigh now and then, and a few tears that follow'd those sighs, were all that told me, he was alive. I spoke to him; but he would not hear me: and, when I persisted, he rais'd his hand at me, and knit his brow so,—I thought, he would have struck me.

Mrs. Bev. O miserable!

Jar. At day-break he started from the bed, and, looking wildly at me, ask'd who I was. I told him, and bade him be of comfort.—Begone, old wretch,

says he,—I have sworn, never to know comfort.—My wife! my child! my sister! I have undone 'em all, and will know no comfort.—Then falling upon his knees, he imprecated curses upon himself.

Mrs. Bev. This is too horrible!—But you did not leave him so?

Jar. I had not the heart, madam. By degrees I brought him to himself. A shower of tears came to his relief; and then he call'd me his kindest friend, and begg'd forgiveness of me like a child.—My heart throbb'd so, I cou'd not speak to him. He turn'd from me for a minute or two, and suppressing a few bitter sighs, enquired after his wretched family.

Mrs. Bev. What a tale is this?—But we have staid too long.

Char. Let us away this moment.

Mrs. Bev. To comfort him, or die with him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Prison.

BEVERLEY *discovered, seated.—After a short pause, he starts up.*

Bev. Why, there's an end then. I have judg'd deliberately, and the result is death. How the self-murderer's account may stand, I know not: but this I know,—the load of hateful life oppresses me too much.—The horrors of my soul are more than I can bear.—[*Offers to kneel.*]—Father of Mercy!—I cannot pray:—Despair has laid his iron hand upon me, and seal'd me for perdition.—Conscience! conscience! thy clamours are too loud:—Here's that shall silence thee.—[*Takes a Phial of Poison out of his Pocket.*]—Thou art most friendly to the miserable. Come, then, thou cordial for sick minds, come to my

heart.—[*Drinks it.*]—Oh, that the grave would bury memory as well as body! for, if the soul sees and feels the sufferings of those dear ones it leaves behind, the everlasting has no vengeance to torment it deeper. —I 'll think no more on 't:—reflection comes too late: —once there was a time for 't,—but now 't is past.— Who 's there?

Enter JARVIS.

Jar. One that hop'd to see you with better looks.— Why d' you turn so from me? I have brought comfort with me: and see, who comes to give it welcome.

Bev. My wife and sister!—Why, 't is but one pang more then,—and farewell, world.

Enter Mrs. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. Where is he?—[*Runs and embraces him*]—O I have him! I have him! And now they shall never part us more.—I have news, love, to make you happy for ever.—Speak to me: I have no heart to see you thus.

Bev. This is a sad place.

Mrs. Bev. We came, to take you from it;—to tell you, the world goes well again;—that Providence has seen our sorrows, and sent the means to help 'em:— Your uncle dy'd yesterday.

Bev. My uncle?—No, do not say so.—O! I am sick at heart!

Mrs. Bev. Indeed! I meant to bring you comfort.

Bev. Tell me he lives then:—If you wou'd bring me comfort, tell me he lives.

Mrs. Bev. And if I did,—I have no power to raise the dead:—He dy'd yesterday.

Bev. And I am heir to him?

Jar. To his whole estate, sir.—But bear it patiently,—'pray, bear it patiently.

Bev. Well, well.—[*Pausing*]—Why fame says, I am rich then?

Mrs. Bev. And truly so.—Why do you look so wildly?

Bev. Do I? The news was unexpected.—But, has he left me all?

Jar. All, all, sir:—He could not leave it from you.

Bev. I am sorry for it.

Mrs. Bev. Why are you disturbed so?

Bev. Has death no terrors in it?

Mrs. Bev. Not an old man's death: yet, if it trouble you, I wish him living.

Bev. And I, with all my heart;—for I have a tale to tell, shall turn you into stone; or, if the power of speech remain, you shall kneel down, and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! What tale is this? And why are we to curse you?—I'll bless you ever.

Bev. No; I have deserv'd no blessings. All this large fortune, this second bounty of heaven, that might have heal'd our sorrows, and satisfy'd our utmost hopes, in a curs'd hour I sold last night.

Mrs. Bev. Impossible!

Bev. That devil Stukely, with all hell to aid him, tempted me to the deed. To pay false debts of honour, and to redeem past errors, I sold the reversion,—sold it for a scanty sum, and lost it among villains.

Char. Why, farewell all then.

Bev. Liberty and life.—Come kneel, and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Then hear me, heaven!—[*Kneels*]—Look down with mercy on his sorrows! Give softness to his looks, and quiet to his heart! On me, on me, if misery must be the lot of either, multiply misfortunes! I'll bear 'em patiently, so he be happy! These hands shall toil for his support; these eyes be lifted up for hourly blessings on him; and every duty of a fond and faithful wife be doubly done, to cheer and comfort him:—So hear me! so reward me!

[*Rises.*]

Bev. I would kneel too; but that offended heaven would turn my prayers into curses; for I have done a deed, to make life horrible to you.

Mrs. Bev. What deed?

Jar. Ask him no questions, madam: this last misfortune has hurt his brain. A little time will give him patience.

Enter STUKELY.

Bev. Why is this villain here?

Stu. To give you liberty and safety. There, madam, 's his discharge.—[*Gives a Paper to* CHARLOTTE.]—Let him fly this moment. The arrest last night was meant in friendship; but came too late.

Char. What mean you, sir?

Stu. The arrest was too late, I say: I would have kept his hands from blood; but was too late.

Mrs. Bev. His hands from blood!—Whose blood?—O, wretch! wretch!

Stu. From Lewson's blood.

Char. No, villain!—Yet what of Lewson? Speak quickly.

Stu. You are ignorant then? I thought, I heard the murderer at confession.

Char. What murderer?—And who is murder'd? Not Lewson?—Say, he lives, and I will kneel and worship you.

Stu. And so I would; but that the tongues of all cry murder. I came in pity, not in malice; to save the brother, not kill the sister. Your Lewson's dead.

Char. O horrible!

Bev. Silence, I charge you.—Proceed, sir.

Stu. No: justice may stop the tale:—and here 's an evidence.

Enter BATES.

Bates. The news, I see, has reach'd you. But take comfort, madam:—[*To* CHARLOTTE]—there 's one without enquiring for you:—Go to him, and lose no time.

Char. O misery! misery! [*Exit* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. Follow her, Jarvis: if it be true that Lewson's dead, her grief may kill her.

Bates. Jarvis must stay here, madam: I have some questions for him.

Stu. Rather let him fly: his evidence may crush his master.

Bev. Why, ay,—this looks like management.

Bates. He found you, quarrelling with Lewson in the street last night.

Mrs. Bev. No; I am sure, he did not.

Jar. Or, if I did,——

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis false, old man;—they had no quarrel,—there was no cause for quarrel.

Bev. Let him proceed, I say.—O! I am sick! sick!—Reach a chair. [*He sits down.*]

Mrs. Bev. You droop and tremble, love.—Your eyes are fixt too:—Yet you are innocent. If Lewson's dead, you kill'd him not.

Enter Dawson.

Stu. Who sent for Dawson?

Bates. 'Twas I.——We have a witness too, you little think of.——Without there!

Stu. What witness?

Bates. A right one.—Look at him.

Enter Lewson *and* Charlotte.

Stu. Lewson! O villains! villains!

[*To* Bates *and* Dawson.]

Mrs. Bev. Risen from the dead! Why, this is unexpected happiness!

Char. Or is't his ghost?—[*To* Stukely]—That sight would please you, sir.

Jar. What riddle 's this?

Bev. Be quick, and tell it, my minutes are but few.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! why so? You shall live long and happily.

Lew. While shame and punishment shall rack that viper.—[*Points at* Stukely]—The tale is short:—

I was too busy in his secrets, and therefore doom'd to die. Bates, to prevent the murder, undertook it:—I kept aloof to give it credit,—

Char. And give me pangs unutterable.

Lew. I felt 'em all, and would have told you:—but vengeance wanted ripening. The villain's scheme was but half executed: the arrest by Dawson follow'd the suppos'd murder: and now, depending on his once wicked associates, he comes to fix the guilt on Beverley.

Mrs. Bev. O! execrable wretch!

Bates. Dawson and I are witnesses of this,—

Lew. And of a thousand frauds: His fortune ruin'd by sharpers and false dice; and Stukely sole contriver and possessor of all.

Daw. Had he but stopt on this side murder, we had been villains still.

Lew. How does my friend?

Bev. Why, well.—Who 's he that asks me?

Mrs. Bev. 'T is Lewson, love.—Why do you look so at him?

Bev. [*Wildly.*] They told me, he was murder'd.

Mrs. Bev. Ay; but he lives to save us.

Bev. Lend me your hand:—the room turns round.

Mrs. Bev. O heaven!

Lew. This villain here disturbs him. Remove him from his sight:—and, on your lives, see that you guard him.—[STUKELY *is taken off by* DAWSON *and* BATES.]—How is it, sir?

Bev. 'T is here,—and here,—[*Pointing to his head and heart*]—And now it tears me!

Mrs. Bev. You are all convuls'd too.—What is 't disturbs you?—My love! my life!—Look at me!—how his eyes flame!

Bev. A furnace rages in this heart.—Down, restless flames,—down to your native hell,—there you shall rack me.—Oh, for a pause from pain!—That pang

was well: it has numb'd my senses. Where 's my wife?—Can you forgive me, love?

Mrs. Bev. Alas! for what?

Bev. For meanly dying.

Mrs. Bev. No,—do not say it.

Bev. As truly as my soul must answer it.—Had Jarvis staid this morning, all had been well: but, press'd by shame, pent in a prison, tormented with my pangs for you, driven to despair and madness, I took the advantage of his absence, corrupted the poor wretch he left to guard me, and swallow'd poison.

Lew. O, fatal deed!

Char. Dreadful and cruel!

Bev. Ay, most accurs'd.—And now I go to my account. This rest from pain brings death.—Bend me, and let me kneel.—[*They lift him from his Chair, and support him on his Knees.*]—I 'll pray for you too.—Thou power that mad'st me, hear me! If, for a life of frailty, and this too hasty deed of death, thy justice doom me, here I acquit the sentence:—but if, enthron'd in mercy where thou sit'st, thy pity has beheld me, send me a gleam of hope, that in these last and bitter moments my soul may taste of comfort!—And for these mourners here,—Oh! let their lives be peaceful, and their deaths happy!

Mrs. Bev. O, save him, save him, heaven!—or let me die too!

Bev. No; live, I charge you.—We have a little one: Tho' I have left him, you will not leave him.—To Lewson's kindness I bequeathe him.—Is not this Charlotte? We have liv'd in love, tho' I have wrong'd you.—Can you forgive me, Charlotte?

Char. Forgive you!—O, my poor brother!

Bev. Already death has seiz'd me:—yet heaven is gracious: I ask'd for hope, as the bright presage of forgiveness; and, like a light blazing through darkness, it comes, and cheers me.—I die, I die.—Oh, for a few short moments! to tell you how my heart bleeds

for you,—that even now, thus dying as I am, my bosom pang is for your miseries.—Support her, heaven! —O mercy! mercy! [*Dies.*]

Lew. How is it, madam?—My poor Charlotte too!

Char. O wretched sister!—her grief is speechless. —Speak to her, Lewson.

Lew. Jarvis, remove her from this sight.—Sorrow like hers forbids complaint.

[JARVIS *and* CHARLOTTE *lead Mrs.* BEVERLEY *away.*]

Some ministering angel bring her peace!—And thou, poor breathless corpse, may thy departed soul have found the rest it pray'd for!—Save but one error, and this last fatal deed, thy life was lovely. Let frailer minds take warning; and, from example, learn that want of prudence is want of virtue.

Follies, if uncontroul'd, of every kind,
Grow into passions, and subdue the mind;
With sense and reason hold superior strife,
And conquer honour, nature, fame and life.

THE END.

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